

Aurangzaib Yousufzai – July 2017

The Thematic Quranic Translation Series Installment 12
(IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE)

THE MYTH OF PROPHET YOUNUS A.S. (JONAH)
IN THE BELLY OF GREAT FISH

Re-defined in the true light of Quran

PRELUDE

The episode of Prophet Younus (Jonah) a.s. in Quran was narrated to highlight his strategic missionary struggle against the terrorist rulers of his time, and was solely meant to enhance the fortitude of Mohammad pbuh in the miseries and affliction he was facing in the wake of his great revolutionary struggle against the savage capitalist rulers of Arabia.

However, like the interpolations exercised in all other enlightening episodes of divine envoys, which invariably emphasized their dauntless struggles for emancipation of the downtrodden masses, this one's picture too was painted with the fake colors of a religious myth, mystery and miracles by the despotic enemies of Islam. Kindly check any available interpretations from any inherited or modern edition of Quran.

This, therefore, is a humble effort in re-infusing the deleted spirit of truth and rationality back into the Quranic narrative and to present the real facts of the episode of Younus a.s. in its true light. This venture is launched to address various challenges facing the nascent Quranic community, and the theological and spiritual matters any religion seeks to expound.

Any probable errors or omissions in the work can be pointed out, with Quranic authority, in a spirit of close academic cooperation and with the aim of achieving a consensus of opinion on this issue.

It is worth mentioning here that this part of research work was inspired by Prof. Abdur Razzaq (late) of Ahl-e-Quran (Lahore) who had individually attempted a logical and academic re-presentation of this theme in some distant past.

Verse 6/86:

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوَّاً وَكُلَّاً فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

“And it is about Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah (Younus), and Lot. And all others did We honor above other people;”

Verse No.21/87—88: آیت: ۲۱/۸۷-۸۸

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنَّ لَنْ نَقْدِرُ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

AND remember the possessor of divine wisdom, Younus (وَذَا النُّونِ), when he went off highly displeased and disturbed (مُغَاضِبًا), assuming that We may not evaluate his high status and his great struggle! Then in the darkness of despair he called out his Lord thus: “There is no authority except Thee! Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! Verily, I have been the one lost in darkness!”

فَاسْتَجِبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

And so We responded unto him and delivered him from the state of grief and distress: for thus do We deliver all who have faith and work for peace.

Verse No. 37/139-149 : آیت: ۳۷/۱۳۹-۱۴۸

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لِيَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

AND, Younus (Jonah) was indeed one of Our Messengers;

إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿٤٠﴾

when he had to migrate (ابق) to an elevated piece of land (الْفُلْك), densely inhabited (المَشْحُون) with people;

فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ

He had worked hard to fulfill his mission (فساهم), but had faced failure (من);

(الْمُدْحَضِينَ);

فَالْتَّقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

But, then, his extreme concentration on his mission (الْحُوت) had fully absorbed/captivated him (فالْتَّقَمَهُ) and he was blaming himself (هو مليم);

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَيْحِينَ لَكِبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

So, had he not been of those doing their utmost (الْمُسَيْحِينَ), he would indeed have languished in the belly of that land (لَكِبِثَ فِي بَطْنِهِ) till the Day when all shall be raised from the dead (يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُون):

فَنَبَذَنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ

but We thought it suitable to cut him off from his people (فَنَبَذَنَاهُ) and plant him on a vast piece of land (بِالْعَرَاءِ), while he was highly sensitive of his weaknesses/drawbacks (وَهُوَ سَقِيم).

وَأَنْبَتَنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِنْ يَقْطِينِ

and We caused to grow for him plants full of fruits (made his efforts fruitful);

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَى مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ

And enhanced his status as Messenger over a hundred thousand, or more, people;

فَآمَنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى حِينٍ

and they all attained to faith, and so We allowed them to enjoy a fulfilling sustenance up to a certain time;

Verse 68/48-50 : ٦٨/٤٨-٥٠ آیت:

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تَكُنْ كَصَاحِبِ الْحُوْتِ إِذْ نَادَى وَهُوَ مَكْفُومٌ

In the same way, you too must remain steadfast for the sake of the rule of your Lord, and be not the victim of despair like Younus, the one devoted to his mission (صَاحِبُ الْحُوْتِ), who cried out [in distress] after having given in to pressures (مَكْفُومٌ).

لَوْلَا أَنْ تَدَارَ كَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ لَنْبَذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ

Because it is to remember that had not grace from his Sustainer reached him, he would indeed have been cast forth (لَنْبَذَ) upon that barren land (بِالْعَرَاءِ) in a state of regret (مَذْمُومٌ):

فَاجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

but his Sustainer had responded to him and placed him among the great Reformers .

Verse 10/98 : ١٠/٩٨ آیت:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرِيَةٌ أَمْنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِلَّا قَوْمٌ يُونُسَ لَيْلَآ أَمْنُوا كَشْفُنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخَرْبِ
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى حِينٍ

For, alas, why wasn't there another community apart from the one of Younus, at that time, whose faith may have awarded them similar blessings: because when they attained to faith we had removed from them sufferings and hardships of the worldly life and provided them for a long time with unlimited sustenance.

A Running Translation now:

And it is about Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah (Younus), and Lot. And all others did We honor above other people.

AND remember the follower of divine wisdom, Younus, when he went off, highly displeased and disturbed, assuming that We may not evaluate his high status and his great struggle! Then in the darkness of despair he called out his Lord thus: "There is no absolute authority except Thee! Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! Verily, I have been the one lost in darkness!" And so We responded unto him and delivered him from the state of grief and distress: for thus do We deliver all who have faith and work for peace.

AND, Younus (Jonah) was indeed one of Our Messengers; when he had to migrate to an elevated piece of land, densely inhabited with people; He had worked hard to fulfill his mission, but had faced failure. But, then, his extreme concentration on his mission kept him fully absorbed/captivated and he felt like blaming himself .

So, had he not been of those doing their utmost, he would indeed have languished in the belly of that land till the Day when all shall be raised from the dead.

But We thought it suitable to cut him off from his people and plant him on a vast piece of land, while he was highly sensitive of his weaknesses/drawbacks. And We caused to grow for him plants full of fruits (made his efforts fruitful); And enhanced his status as Messenger over a hundred thousand, or more, people;

And they all attained to faith, and so We allowed them to enjoy a fulfilling sustenance up to a certain time.

In the same way, you too must remain steadfast for the sake of the rule of your Lord, and be not the victim of despair like Younus, the one devoted to his mission who cried out [in distress] after having given in to pressures. Because it is to remember that had not grace from his Sustainer reached him, he would indeed have been cast forth upon that barren land in a state of regret. But his Sustainer had responded to him in time and placed him among the great Reformers.

For, alas, why wasn't there another community apart from the one of Younus, at that time, whose faith may have awarded them similar blessings: because when they attained to faith we had removed from them sufferings and hardships of the worldly life and provided them for a long time with unlimited sustenance.

Important words given in brackets above:

Mughaaziban [مُغَاضِبًا] : wrath, rage, indignation, angry, irritated, furious

(fi az-zulumaat) (فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ): In the darkness; darkness of despair, disappointment.

Al-Fulk (الْفُلْك): A wide piece of land or field; pieces of land within a circle and elevated; boat; ship.

Abaqa (ابق) : run away, to escape.

Al-mashhoon (المشحون): loaded, charged, filled; a densely populated community or town; a loaded ship, or room, or house, etc.

Fa-Sahama (فَسَاهِم): Sahama: to strive hard for an assignment; to make serious efforts; to cast arrows; to face or confront someone or something.

Al-Mudhazeen (المُدْحَازِين): Loser, suffered defeat.

Al-Hoot (الْحُوت): to concentrate upon a central object; to move in circles around something; concentrate on orders or purposes; fish; movement of fish in circles.

Fa Al-Taqum-hu (فالتفح); luqm; to take a bite by your mouth; to grip into jaws, or hold; to captivate from all around;

Muleem (مُلِيمٌ) : to be regretful; to feel disgraced, insulted, lowered.

Al-Musabbaheen (المسبّحين): Those who strive with full capacity and resources; as is done by a swimmer while swimming.

فَبَذَنَاهُ (Fa-nabaznaa-hu) : Nabaza: To cut off from people and move aside; to become a hermit; to throw away something after rejecting; surrender, resign, discard.

Bil 'Araa (بِالْعَرَاءِ) : in a vast land; in a barren land

Saqeem (سقیم) : Saqam: sickness, shortcoming, weakness, unhappy, dejected, distempered, disordered.

Makzoom (مكظوم) : under immense pressure; man afflicted with grief, silent, in pain.

Mazmoom (مدوم) : Discredited, blamed, reviled, reproved, forsaken.